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News Release

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Minneapolis man convicted of manufacturing child pornography

After less than two hours of deliberation, a federal jury issued a guilty verdict yesterday against a Minneapolis man who made a pornographic videotape of a 14-year-old boy whom he enticed to his home.

At the United States Courthouse in Minneapolis, Refugio Gadea Pliego, 29, was found guilty March 26 of one count of producing child pornography following the two-day trial. A superseding indictment was filed against Pliego on Jan. 8, 2008.

According to court documents, Pliego produced the visual depictions of sexual activity with the boy sometime between 2006 and 2007. Police uncovered the child pornography during the execution of a search warrant at Pliego's apartment.

Pliego faces a potential maximum penalty of 30 years in federal prison. A sentencing date before U.S. District Court Judge Richard Kyle has not been scheduled.

This case is the result of an investigation by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tracy L. Perzel.

This case is part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), a national initiative that encourages the use of multi-jurisdictional task forces to investigate and prosecute cases that involve the sexual exploitation of children over the Internet. PSC urges that law enforcement efforts be complemented by community-wide campaigns to assist victims of exploitation and to educate parents, other adults, and children about Internet safety.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, one in 33 children receives an unwanted sexual solicitation online each year. One in four children experiences unwanted exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet each year. And, more than 20,000 images of child pornography are posted on the Internet every week. Moreover, recent research conducted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons indicates a strong correlation between possessing or distributing child

pornography and committing sexual-contact crimes against children.